

- ☑ Soldiers helped create new "redball express" (back)
- ☑ Our Young Marines stand tall for troops (back)
- ☑ On August 1, 1943, 165 B-24s Liberators launched to bomb Ploesti, flying so low they had to ascend to avoid smokestacks at 210 feet high and B-24 gunners duelled with gunners in towers and church steeples.

EOD officer heads Langley wartime push

by SSgt. Andrew Biscoe

A Westover junior officer spent a three-month TDY managing a major command's Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) program that was quickly put to the test for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

AFRC and Air Combat Command officials chose 1st Lt. Jason E. Rose, a reservist and flight commander of the Westover EOD unit, to be part of ACC's EOD program.

"Two of their most experienced senior noncommissioned officers were scheduled to deploy in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom at the beginning of February," Rose said. "Around mid to late January, ACC asked AFRC to find a senior noncommissioned officer to fill the void. Tom Piper, the AFRC Command EOD Manager, had a short list of folks he considered right for the job and my name was on it."

Piper has been AFRC EOD program manager for three years. "Jason is an excellent example of the reserve," he said. "He's a citizen soldier. His mind and soul are 100 percent EOD."

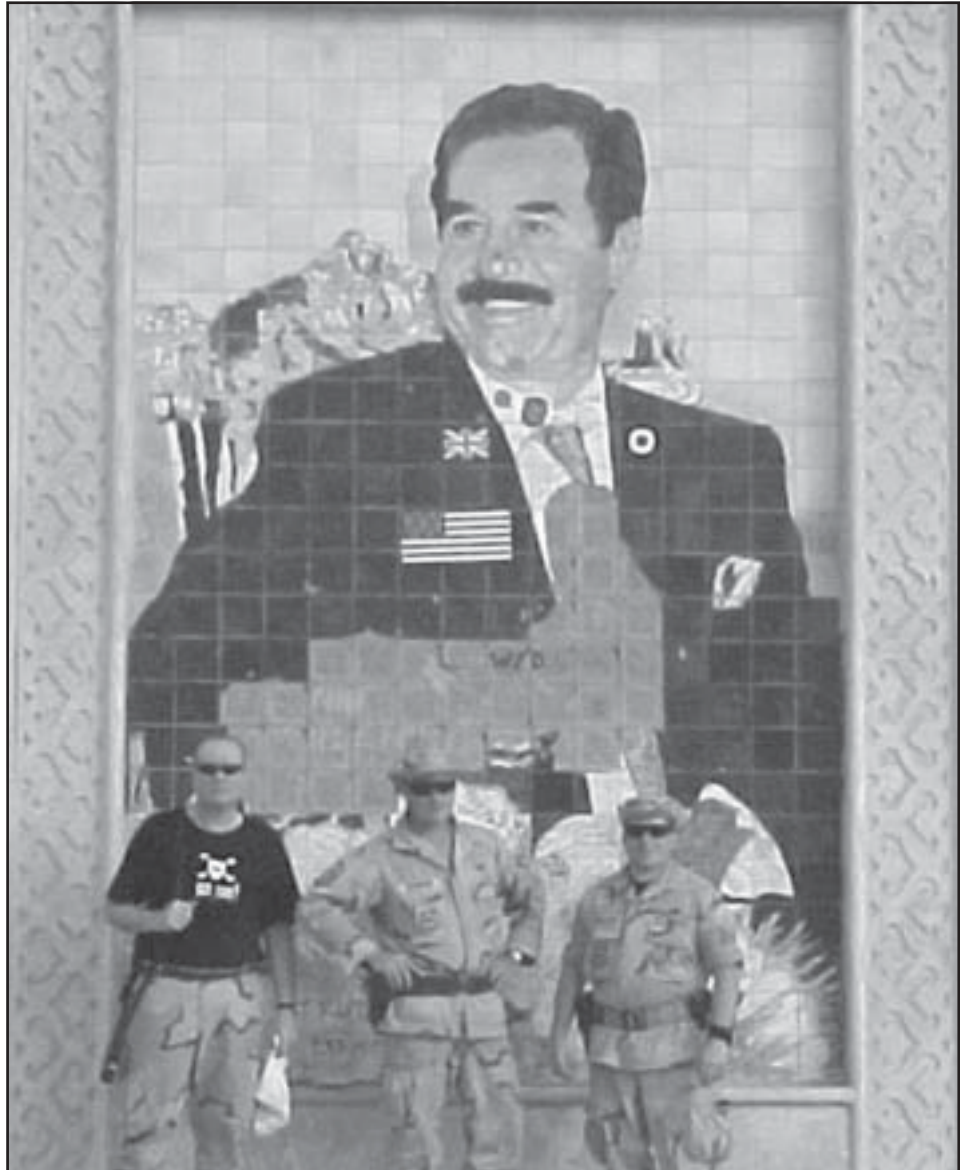
Even though Rose was not the senior NCO that command officials might have had in mind, he had plenty of enlisted experience to back up his credibility.

"The combination of nine years prior enlisted experience as an EOD technician and participation in AFRC-level initiatives were both key to my success at headquarters," Rose said. He arrived for duty at Langley AFB, Va., on Feb. 6. Rose's experience also helped assert his credibility with people in his chain of command. "It helped the folks I dealt with day-to-day look beyond the 'butter bar,'" he said.

With the American buildup in Iraq gearing up in February, Rose immediately went to work on one of the most important programs in the buildup to the war in Iraq.

"The team I joined was responsible for managing the largest EOD program in the Air Force," Rose said. The program involved more than 300 people across 15 military

A great Kodak moment



Members of the 439th Airlift Control Flight send "wish you were here" greetings back home in a photo taken recently in Baghdad. An 11-member Patriot Wing ALCE team deployed to the Baghdad airport to organize airfield operations in May. From left are MSgt. Tom, SMSgt. David and TSgt. Gary.

installations - approximately one-third of all Air Force EOD assets.

"We coordinated the single largest wartime deployment of Air Force EOD resources since Operation Desert Storm. Throughout the buildup to and execution of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the ACC staff served as a reachback capability for the

forward-deployed CENTAF staff."

Rose's most important job was directly supporting the Chief of Staff of the Air Force, Gen. John P. Jumper.

"We worked on making General Jumper's vision for an airborne engineer capability a reality," Rose said. "We created

(continued on next page)



ALMOST HOME -- A Marine just off the C-5 from the Iraqi Freedom AOR calls home even before putting down his Westover Welcome flag in the Passenger Terminal recently.

Soldiers helped create new "redball express"

Among those who recently received a Westover Welcome home were logistics specialists of the 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, N.Y. The soldiers of the 584th Corps Support Btn. had run supply columns north and south across Iraq reminiscent of the Red Ball Express of World War II.

They started the war at a port near Iraq during the pre-war build-up of supplies. As the Army moved north the staff members organized the truck columns to keep them supplied. They moved ammunition, food, water, medical supplies and the other logistics needed to keep an army moving.

Following the fall of Baghdad, the logistics specialists kept truck columns moving all the way to Balad, northern Iraq, and back again.

PATRIOT express

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Security guidelines prohibit using deploying reservist's last names)

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EOD ... (From page 1)

two lightweight, airborne engineer teams six months ahead of schedule and in time for successful employment in Iraq."

The Air Force's renowned RED HORSE civil engineering teams took this concept that Rose had helped put together, to Iraq in the spring. The airborne RED HORSE teams deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of operations and worked at seized airfields for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Back at ACC headquarters, Rose said the work environment at Langley blended all of the elements of the total force.

"The lines were very blurred; there was no distinction between active duty, Guard or Reserve," he said. "In fact, there were a few days when only Guard and Reserve augmentees staffed the office and I was the senior guy calling the shots. The icing on the cake was the fact that it made no difference that I was the reserve troop to the active-duty folks in the field who contacted the staff looking for guidance."

Rose's TDY assignment, which came at wartime, proved to be one of the most valuable in the 29-year-old's military career.

"This was by far one of the most challenging yet most rewarding (assignments) of my career. Maj. (Bert) Braza and others consistently reminded me that I experienced more in three months than some staff members experience in three years. Being able to keep up with the active guys was validation for me that all the time spent training as well as the investment made in me by my superiors (both officers and NCOs) over the years was well worthwhile. Being a second lieutenant at a major command headquarters took some getting used to, not only for me but for the folks over me in the chain-of-command as well. Once I proved my worth it became a non-issue."

Rose returned to Westover on May 14 and was released from 20 months of active duty.



Rose

Our Young Marines stand tall for troops

Troops returning home from the Iraqi Freedom AOR received a special welcome back from the Westover Young Marines who greeted them in formation in uniform at the Passenger Terminal recently.

About 90 Westover Young Marines make up the local unit of the nation-wide organization for youths from eight-years-old to high school graduates. They meet at 6 p.m. on Thursdays in the Base Hangar. Activities include physical fitness training, drill and ceremonies, and classes in land navigation, first aid and leadership skills.

The Westover Young Marines are 90 percent funded through fund-raisers. During the Christmas season they pick up evergreens in Maine and sell wreaths and place settings.

"The program is about leadership. I've seen 10-year-olds locked on with leadership skills better than 40-year-olds," said Bob Dittrich, an adult leader of the group. In July, he will lead one of two tours planned of Civil War battlefields. Also planned is a senior leadership program at the National Guard's Camp John Fogarty, R.I.

For information on the Westover Young Marines, call local commander retired Sgt. Maj. Edward Mitrook of East Longmeadow at 525-0924 or e-mail him at USMCE9ED@Charter.net

Pat Stats

Served since Feb. 2, 2003

7,727 passengers -- 2,554 aircraft
28,807,005 pounds of cargo
Info from MSgt. Jim Garrity, 42APS

15,324 hot meals served
Box lunches: 5,024
Info from MSgt. David Beauregard, 439SVS

Fuel since Feb.1
17,081,735 gallons of JP-8
Info from Jim Maloney, Fuels

Express-ions

